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## Media Release

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### **MKO calls on Justice Minister and RCMP to act on First Nation policing crisis**

WINNIPEG, MB – MKO Grand Chief David Harper joined Keewatin Tribal Council Tribal Chief Irvin Sinclair, Northlands Denesuline First Nation Chief Joe Antsanen, and Fox Lake Cree Nation Chief Walter Spence in calling for immediate action by Manitoba Justice Minister Andrew Swan and the RCMP to end the policing crisis at the Northlands Denesuline First Nation and other northern First Nation communities. “The Minister and the RCMP Commanding Officer have been aware since June, 2012 of the ongoing policing crisis at the Northlands Denesuline First Nation in Lac Brochet and have failed to take action to ensure public safety and to maintain law and order,” stated MKO Grand Chief David Harper.

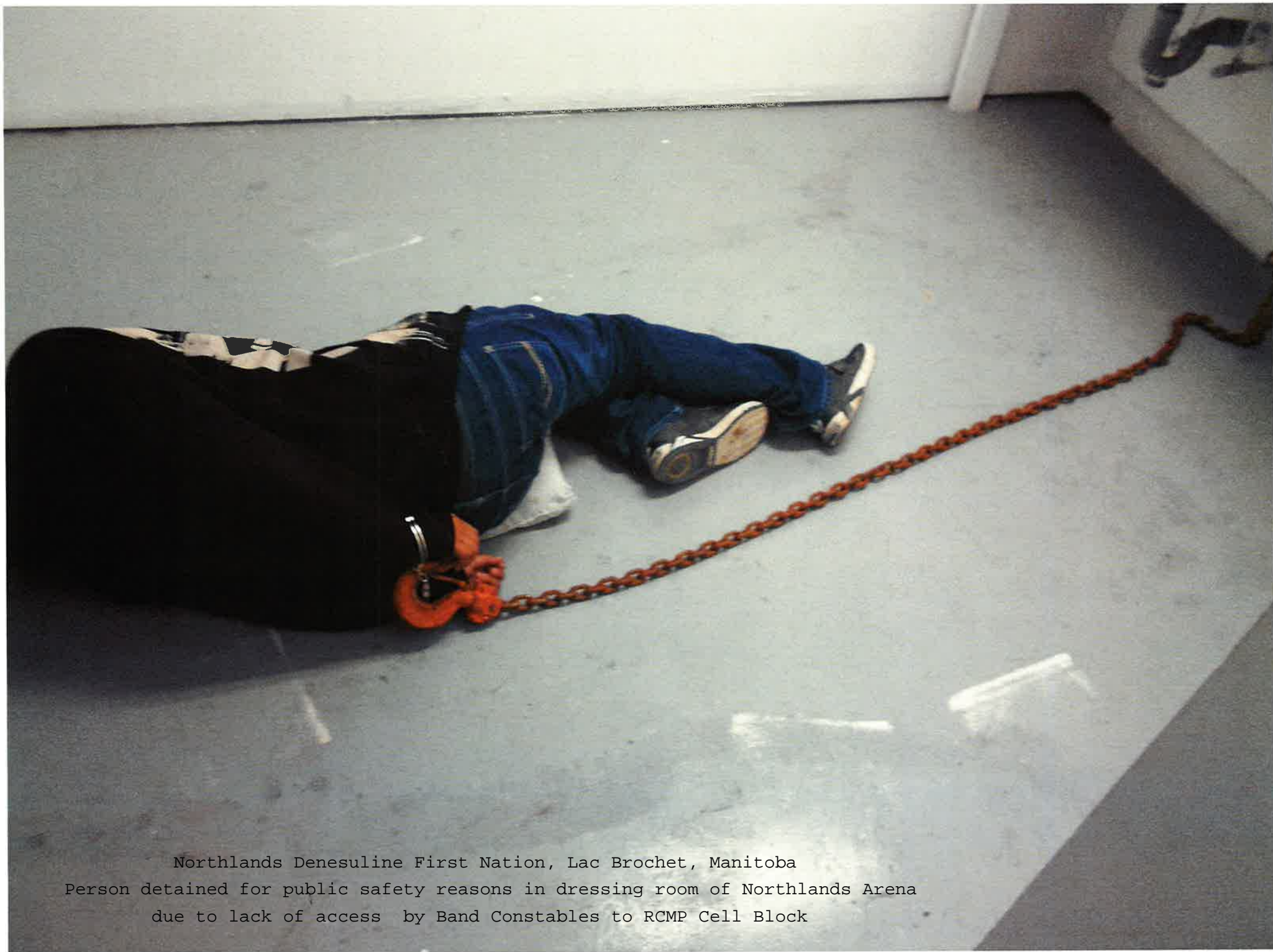
Under Section 92(14) of the *British North America Act, 1867*, the province of Manitoba is responsible for the administration of justice, including policing. The RCMP delivers policing services as the Manitoba Provincial Police under contract with the province through the *Provincial Police Service Agreement*.

“We met with Minister Swan and the RCMP in June, but they are not responding to the policing crisis in my community,” said Northlands Denesuline First Nation Chief Joe Antsanen, “We no longer have a Band Constable in Lac Brochet who is certified by the provincial Justice department and the RCMP took away the keys to our detention facilities in March of this year. We have been forced to take matters into our own hands and to detain people in the Northlands Arena for safety reasons or for assaults or drug and alcohol infractions”, added Chief Antsanen.

Keewatin Tribal Council Tribal Chief Irvin Sinclair continued, “First Nation leaders have had meeting after meeting with Premier Selinger, the provincial Justice Minister, the RCMP and Public Safety Canada to talk about how we can protect public safety and maintain law and order in our communities. The province and Canada responded by completely shutting out First Nations from the discussions on the renewal of the *Provincial Police Service Agreement* that was signed in March, 2012.” “Manitoba has stopped certifying new Band Constables and Canada will not give First Nations a straight answer about the future of the Band Constable Program,” continued KTC Grand Chief Sinclair.

Fox Lake First Nation Chief Walter Spence added, “we don’t have a Band Constable or detention facilities at the Fox Lake First Nation in Bird, Manitoba. We often have to wait several hours for the RCMP in Gillam to respond to urgent calls from my community.”

“In June, the former RCMP Commanding Officer told Minister Swan that that ‘secondary policing’ through Band Constables is a necessary part of the policing services delivered by the RCMP under the PPSA. A year ago, MKO was shocked when Minister Swan rejected the opportunity to work in partnership with MKO to receive \$2 million in federal funding to train 30 First Nation police officers from the MKO First Nations. It is time for Manitoba to stop passing the buck to Canada and to take action to protect the public safety of First Nations people in Manitoba”, concluded Grand Chief Harper.



Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Lac Brochet, Manitoba  
Person detained for public safety reasons in dressing room of Northlands Arena  
due to lack of access by Band Constables to RCMP Cell Block



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